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THE SECONDARY INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

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New types of schools spring up in response to the demands of a people. They are not often the creation of leaders in advance of their times, nor do they come as fads and fancies from the brain of an educational dreamer. In this respect they are not unlike all other institutions created by the people.

The Secondary Industrial School of Columbus, Georgia, was established in response to the demand of the people for a more practical and useful education. The demand may not be expressed in definite terms by the lawmakers or by the press. It is usually indicated by express dissatisfaction with existing types of educational work, and suggestions that something more practical and useful to young people and to society be given in the schools. It only remains for some thoughtful educator to interpret the complaints and demands of the people and formulate plans which will more directly meet their wishes.

The fundamental principle of education upon which the Secondary Industrial School was established may be expressed in these words: The dominant life of the people should influence the schemes for the education of the youth.

This is not a newly-discovered principle in education. It has always existed and has always influenced nations in the training of their young. In ancient Greece the young were skilled in athletics because the athlete was the ideal in society. When the dominant interest of the Romans was conquest through arms, a soldier's training became the chief schooling of the boy. Ever since the ancient empires of the Orient regarded as their dominant interests the traditions of their forefathers, history, philosophy and religion have been the chief means by which the young were educated. When in western Europe there was the new birth of learning, a study of the classics dominated the schools. When the spirit of

invention and research sprang up, scientific studies began to form the framework of curricula.

As the American people are beginning to regard industrialism in a broad and high sense of the term as the dominant interest, industrial training in the schools of the land follows as a necessary consequence.

During the past quarter of a century individuals and societies, recognizing the value of such training, have established schools of hand craft, manual training, technical education and trades. Larger organizations, such as city school systems, moved more slowly, but they for years have been moving none the less surely towards the establishment of industrial and trade schools.

The first industrial or trade school to be established in connection with a public school system is that in Columbus, Georgia, known as the Secondary Industrial School. It is quite natural that one of the smaller cities should have led in this movement, and in no city of America were the conditions more favorable than those in Columbus. It is a city of about 25,000 inhabitants. Its location at the head of navigation and at the foot of immense water power on the Chattahoochee River has made it a manufacturing center. The dominant life of the people is therefore that of industry, and industrial training naturally came to be one of the important means used in educating the children.

Its twelve cotton mills, aggregating more than 200,000 spindles, make it one of the important cotton mill centers of the South. It has also extensive iron-working establishments and woodworking industries, carriage, wagon and clothing factories. For more than a decade its elementary schools have done more than the usual amount of work in manual training, handicrafts, and domestic science. The city has likewise maintained free kindergartens. Several years ago it undertook to specialize somewhat its efforts in educational work, and adapted certain schools to the particular needs of certain classes of people.

For illustration, it established the Primary Industrial School for the children of mill operatives, who, in the absence of compulsory education laws and because of peculiar home conditions, could not be reached by the elementary schools of the city system. Handicrafts were made the basis of work in this school and through them motives were found for the mastery of the elementary school

branches. The school did much settlement work and sought through the children to bring about better conditions in the homes of the working people. Its contribution to industrial efficiency was therefore through the improvement in the domestic life of the workers. In this respect it has accomplished great results.

Serious study has been given in Columbus to the proper education of the negro children. About one-third of the population is black. These young people after leaving school have distinct spheres of activity. Their dominant life or interest may be clearly differentiated from that of other classes. The city has liberally equipped the negro schools for practical industrial training after the fashion of the great Tuskegee Institute, but, of course, in a more elementary way. Every negro girl is given thorough training for five years in home economics, cookery, sewing, and laundering. What is of great importance also the spirit of service is engendered. Every boy is given instruction in carpentry and blacksmithing, and the industrial training for boys has this year extended to include bricklaying, shoe and harness repairing. These avenues of employment are open almost exclusively to the negro youth of the city.

Under these civic and educational conditions, the Secondary Industrial School was an easy growth. It is true that the municipality did not bear the entire expense of creating this school—indeed, it bore a small portion of it—but the school is now maintained, as are all other schools of the city, by the public funds.

The equipment represents an investment of something over \$100,000, much of which was donated by individuals and corporations interested in the creation of such an institution. The land and several thousand dollars were given by a public-spirited citizen who has an especial interest in this type of education. The school was built without any very large bequest, without the issue of bonds, and without any very unusual appropriation from the municipal government. Not in the slightest degree, however, is the school recognized as the peculiar property or interest of any individual, corporation, class or faction of the people. The entire city looks upon it as its property, as its institution, and the people are united in their belief in its usefulness and in their determination to support it generously.

The aim of the institution is to prepare the youth of Columbus and vicinity for intelligent and efficient service in industrial life.

The term "industrial life" is taken to include commercial activities as well as manufacturing interests. It is a trade school, and more; it is an academic trade school of high-school rank. This means that the essentials of a high-school course are given and a trade is taught. Under the head of essentials are included the usual high-school studies in mathematics, English, history and science. No foreign languages are taught. There has never been any intention of teaching young people a trade without giving them good academic training, for this starts a young person in life with immediate earning power, but with an earning power that is very limited. The aim is to give that culture, intelligence and mental acumen which carry the skilled mechanic or trained accountant on to unlimited earning power.

It is a school of the people, maintained by the people, and for all classes of people. It is not recognized as a school for artisans, nor a school of the leisure class seeking some fad. Within its student body are found the sons and daughters of the well-to-do, working earnestly and industrially side by side with the children of the dollar-a-day man. The people of all classes living in such industrial atmosphere have come to realize that the greatest opportunities for service to mankind, usefulness to society, and breadwinning occupations lie in industrial pursuits. Those who enter the school necessarily do so with a purpose more or less definite. The organization requires the pupil on entering to select one trade or industry, to which, in addition to the academic subjects required of all, he shall apply himself throughout the entire course. The plans followed embrace some rather unique features. The session continues throughout the year except the month of August. The hours of the school are the ordinary working hours, from eight to four with thirty minutes intermission. The traditional Saturday holiday is eliminated.

Under the supervision of the city superintendent and management of the board of trustees, the school is also supervised by an advisory board of five experts representing the leading industries and commercial interests of the city. The requirements for admission are sound bodies, fourteen years of age, and education in common school studies through the sixth grade of the elementary schools. The candidate for graduation, having completed the academic and industrial training, is required to spend at least two months in fac-

tory, shop or business establishment, without compensation, and make daily reports to the school on efficiency. Reports also come weekly from the foremen over such workers.

The unusual length of session has several advantages. First, it reduces or practically eliminates the great waste in education through loss of time in a youth's life. Second, it utilizes in an economical and business-like way the educational plant without loss of interest on the investment through idleness and disuse. Third, it gives opportunity for a young man or a young woman to concentrate his or her educational efforts into a few years. Fourth, it offers more than twice as many hours of school work per year as the ordinary school working under the traditional nine-months' session, thus enabling the student to accomplish in the three years of the course what would ordinarily be accomplished in six years. This brings him through his high and trade school training before the average boy is more than half through his high school course. The graduate is prepared for useful service, has good earning power, or training fitting him for entrance into a technological school, which, however, is not the primary aim of the school.

While the hours of the school day may seem, in the light of traditional school work, to be rather long and to work a hardship upon pupils, the interspersing of shop work, or industrial training, throughout the day, giving relief from the constant nerve tension required in the purely academic work, and the serving of a wholesome hot lunch in the school at mid-day, remove the possibility of detriment to health. This lunch is prepared under the direction of the domestic science department.

At first some pupils coming from the other schools find it a little difficult to adjust themselves to the earlier hours, but the graduates of the school never find any difficulty in adjusting themselves, the morning after graduation, to working hours. One of the most admirable features of the whole school is the splendid spirit of interest, activity, and sympathetic industry manifested throughout the faculty and student body. All are wholesome, alive, energetic and ready for anything that comes up for the good of the school.

The advisory board, made up of persons generally recognized in the community as leaders in the several industries and commercial activities, not only serve to keep the industrial work of the school

of a thoroughly practical nature, but also to link the school closely to the industrial establishments of the community. It is to be noticed that the State of New York has embodied this feature in it's recent law providing for trade schools.

The requirements for admission in age and scholastic advancement seem to have met with favor on the part of those who have later taken up the organization of trade and industrial schools. Fourteen is quite early enough for a boy to start upon his trade training, for he then comes out into industrial life at a minimum age of seventeen. The average age is somewhat above this, and yet, if the age is put much above fourteen, many are lost entirely to all such school training.

It is the aim at all times to be closely in touch with the actual industrial occupations. In the shops nothing is produced for the scrap pile. All work is carefully done from the student's drawings and usually from his own blue prints. Every product has an economic value which cannot be divorced from the educational value of the process. The products are the property of the school, and if sold, the fund is converted into raw material to be used by the boy in producing other products of economic value while developing boys who are to become economic units. Excursions are made to shops and industrial establishments for observation and discussion, but always with a view to making the next product more valuable or the manipulation of the machine more effective.

The student having completed the course of academic and industrial training laid down in the school requirements, is placed, by the school or an advisory board member, in some position for which he has fitted himself. Without pay he conforms to all the requirements of the establishment, thus giving his real efficiency a practical test. Falling into the working hours of the institution, whether it be a cotton mill or a bank, he touches elbows with his fellow workers and gets an insight into the human side of industrial life that no school can give him. He sends to the head of his school department daily reports on punctuality in attendance, persistence throughout the day, promptness in executing tasks, readiness in interpreting drawings and orders, relationship to fellow workers, and the nature and amount of work done.

Thus far the school has had no difficulty in placing its student workers, and has had the intelligent and sympathetic co-operation

of business houses and industrial establishments. This plan not only tests the pupil's real efficiency, but puts him where he may be sure of a job if he proves his worth. Coming from his overalls in the shop at the close of a day's work he may receive his diploma (in dress suit, if he please) and return to his overalls the next morning. Under the industrial ideal of this nation the typical American is the one who can wear overalls as gracefully as he wears a dress suit.

The graduation exercises of the first class to go out from the school presented some unique and interesting features, which were expressive of the aims of the school. It consisted of nine persons, three from the dressmaking department, two from the machine shop, four from the business training department. There were no orations or essays, few flowers and little music. After a plain, direct statement of the ideals of the school by one of the young men, the three young women representing the dressmaking department measured, drafted the pattern, cut, fitted and made a dress on the stage from cloth woven during the session in the textile department. After making the dress, the young ladies retired, and one of them returned, wearing the dress, and in it she received her diploma. A simple statement of the advantages of dressmaking as a bread-winning occupation, an explanation of the system of drafting, and of the processes involved in making the dress was made by one of the young ladies.

After the dress was cut, other departments of the school were represented in the graduating exercises while these girls at one end of the stage were making music with the sewing machine and plying their nimble fingers. The graduates from the business training department astonished the audience with the rapidity of their business calculations, took dictation from teacher and from citizens in the audience, and turned off good, business-like letters. A lawyer surprised them by stepping up on the stage and dictating a long legal letter, which was promptly reproduced without an error. Most of the graduates had positions the day after their graduation. All of them had good positions within less than six weeks and that, too, in the summer of 1908 famous for retrenchment in working forces.

The trades or lines of industrial training offered by the school are, for the girls, millinery, dressmaking and business training; for

the boys, carpentry, pattern-making, machinist, business training and cotton-mill work. Every course extends over three full years of forty-eight weeks each, and requires from twenty-four to thirty hours a week, in addition to academic work. This applies to business training as well as to shop work. There are no ten-week courses to turn out clerks and artisans without any academic training.

Every boy is required to take mechanical drawing throughout his course, and every girl must have thorough training in home economics. As the probability is that at least eighty per cent of the young women graduating from the school will some day have the care and management of a home, and as all of them will have more or less to do with the making of a home, considerable importance is attached to thorough training in home economics. These studies include plain, fancy and dietetic cookery, house cleaning and decoration, sanitation, marketing, planning meals, and the intelligent and economical management of a home in a broad sense. Such training of future home makers will contribute indirectly to the increased industrial efficiency of the workers who will come from these homes.